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WH-2034

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May 19, 1966

Mr. Mark Lane
178 Spring St.,
New York, N.Y. 10012

Dear Mr. Lane,

The essential point of my letter of May 11 and that of May 17, which I hope Holt will also forward to you is that there is enough room for all of us, and that all of us should have better things to do than fight each other and make claims in print that damage each other. There is nothing reprehensible in having an income from work, nor in having assistance. These are norms in our society. Having been entirely without income myself for two and a half years, I sincerely regret that yours was so little better.

When you do read my book, I suggest that beginning on page 113 you will find I took up the cudgels for you.

With half of each of your two last paragraphs I do disagree. There can be no doubt you are right in saying, "for only through fair treatment of the accused may it be said that the democratic society functions in the area of criminal jurisprudence." I believe this so strongly that one of the three parts of my book is devoted to Oswald when in the hands of public authority. Properly, your statement is limited to "the area of criminal jurisprudence." My statement was not, and the defense of the democratic society, as I see it, involves more than "the area of criminal jurisprudence." Especially in this case.

With your belief the Report was credited by many only because Justice Warren's name was on it I am in entire accord. You do not quote Trever-Roper's words that I believe unfair, that the Chief Justice did the "bulk of the work", and I do not blame you, for it is inaccurate also. You shift to "bear the burden of responsibility". I do not and cannot agree with this formulation, either and I regard it also as unfair and largely self-defeating. In the end, I hope, when the intensity of the emotions subside, you will see this dispassionately. By then, alas, the damage I do not believe you intend will have been done. Bear in mind that the passage from my book to which I referred you is one of a number in which I am confident you will agree I pull no punches on Mr. Warren. He was wrong. We have all been, though few if any with such magnitude. Yet I still regard him as one of the great men and better influences in our society, even though I am also not in accord with all his decisions.

I note those things in my letter that you ignored, and I am content to let it rest there. I also note your gratuitous insult and I will ignore the very obvious responses, including references to the eminent historian, for it is not my intention or desire to engage in an exchange of insults. I have more constructive purposes to which to put my time and certainly you must. I will be satisfied if you will restrain the public inaccuracies.

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg